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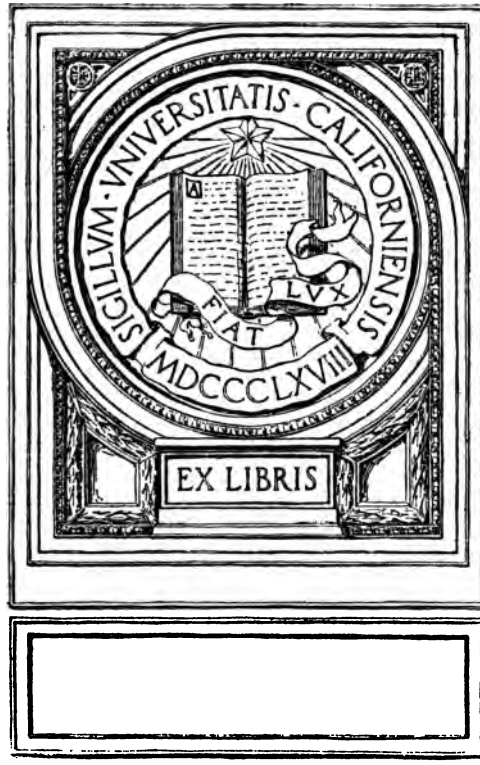
ON HUTTEN

"A Knight Of The Order Of Poets"

DAVID STARR JORDAN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ULRICH VON HUTTEN

"Knight of the Order of Poets"

By

DAVID STARR JORDAN

President of Leland Stanford Jr. University

"Die Luft der Freiheit weht"

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PREFATORY NOTE

For many of the details of the life of Hutten, and for most of the quotations from Hutten's writings given in this book, the writer is indebted to the excellent memoir by David Friedrich Strauss, entitled "Ulrich von Hutten." (Fourth Edition: Bonn, 1878.) No attempt has been made to give here an account of Hutten's writings, only a few of the more noteworthy being mentioned.

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ULRICH VON HUTTON

Four centuries ago began the great modern struggle for freedom of thought which has made our modern civilization possible. I wish here to give something of the story of a man who in his day was not the least in this conflict—a man who dared to think and act for himself when thought and act were costly—Ulrich von Hutten.

Near Frankfort-on-the-Main, on a sharp pinnacle of rock above the little railway station of Vollmerz, may still be found the scanty ruins of an old castle which played a brave part in German history before it was destroyed in the Thirty Years War.

In this castle of Steckelberg, in the year 1488, was born Ulrich von Hutten. He was the last of a long line of Huttens of Steckelberg, strong men who knew not fear, who had fought for the Emperor in all lands whither the imperial eagle had flown, and who, when the empire was

at peace, had fought right merrily with their neighbors on all sides. Robber-knights they were, no doubt, some or all of them; but in those days all was fair in love and in war. And this line of warriors centered in Ulrich von Hutten, and with him it ended. "The wild kindred has gone out with this its greatest."

Ulrich was the eldest son, and bore his father's name. But he was not the son for which his father had hoped. Slender of figure, short of stature, and weak of limb, Ulrich seemed unworthy of his burly ancestry. The horse, the sword, and the lute were not for him. He tried hard to master them, and to succeed in all things worthy of a knight. But he was strong only with his books. At last to his books his father consigned him, and, sorely disappointed, he sent Ulrich to the monastery of Fulda to be made a priest.

A wise man, Eitelwolf von Stein, became his friend, and disclosed to him a life braver than that of a priest, nobler than that of a knight,—the life of a scholar. To Hutten's father Eitelwolf

wrote: "Would you bury a genius like that in the cloister? He must be a man of letters." But the father had decided once for all. Ulrich must be a priest, else he must never return to Steckelberg. And the son took his fate in his own hands. He renounced the priesthood as he had been forced to renounce knighthood. He fled from Fulda, to make his way as a scholar in the world—a world in which, in those days as in most others, scholarship received scanty recognition.

At the same time, another young man whose history was to be interwoven with his own, Martin Luther, fled from the turbulence and deceit of this same world to the solitude of the monastery of Erfurth. By very different paths they came at last to work in the same cause, and their methods of action were not less different.

To the University of Cologne Hutten went, and with the students of that day he was trained in the mysteries of scholasticism, and in the Latin of the schoolmen and the priests. Wonderful prob-

lems they pondered over, and they used to write long arguments in Latin for or against propositions which came nowhere within the domain of fact. That scholarship stood related to reality, and that it must find its end and justification in action, was no part of the philosophy of those times.

But Hutten and his friends cared little for scholastic puzzles, and they gave themselves to the study of the beauties of Latin poetry and to the newly opened mine of the literature of Greece. They delighted in Virgil and Lucian and still more in Homer and Aeschylus.

The Turks had conquered Constantinople, and the fall of the Greek Empire had driven many learned Greeks to the west of Europe. There some of the scholars received them with open arms, and eagerly learned from them to read Homer and Aristotle in the original tongue, and the New Testament also. Those who followed these studies came to be known as Humanists. But most of the universities and the monasteries in

Germany looked upon this revival of Greek culture as pernicious and antichristian. Poetry they despised. The Latin Vulgate met their religious needs, and Greek was to them only another name for Paganism. The party name of Obscurantists ("Dunkelmänner") was given to these, and this name has remained with them on the records of history.

In the letters of one of Hutten's comrades we find this confession of faith, which is interesting as expressing the feelings of young men of that time: "There is but one God, but he has many forms, and many names—Jupiter, Sol, Apollo, Moses, Christ, Luna, Ceres, Proserpine, Tellus, Mary. But be careful how you say that. One must disclose these things in secret like Eleusinian mysteries. In matters of religion you must use the cover of fables and riddles. *You, with Jupiter's grace* (that is, the grace of the best and greatest god), *can despise the lesser gods in silence.* When I say Jupiter, I mean Christ and the true God. The coat and the beard and the

bones of Christ I worship not. I worship the living God, who wears no coat nor beard, and left no bones upon the earth."

Hutten wished to know the world, not from books only, but to see all cities and lands; to measure himself with other men; to rise above those less worthy. The danger of such a course seemed to him only the greater attraction. Content to him was laziness; love of home but a dog's delight in a warm fire. "I live," he said, "in no place rather than another; my home is everywhere."

So he tramped through Northern Germany in most sorry fashion. In his own mind he was a scholar, a poet, a knight of the noblest blood of Germany; to others he was a little sickly and forlorn vagrant. Never strong of body, he was stricken by a miserable disease which filled his life with a succession of attacks of fever. He was shipwrecked on the Baltic Sea, sick and wretched in Pomerania, and at last he was received in charity in the house of Henning Lötz, professor of law at Greifeswald.

This action has given Lötz's name immortality, for it is associated with the first of those fiery poems of Hutten which, in their way, are unique in literature. For Hutten was restless and proud, and was not to be content with bread and butter and a new suit of clothes. His independence was displeasing to the professor, who finally, in utter disgust, turned Hutten out of doors in midwinter. When the boy had tramped awhile in storm and slush, two servants of Lötz overtook him on the road and robbed him of his money and clothing. In a most forlorn plight he reached a little inn in Rostock, in Mecklenberg. Here the professors in the university received him kindly, and made provision for his needs. Then he let loose the fury of his youthful anger on Lötz. As ever, his poetic genius rose with his wrath, and the more furious his temper the greater his force as a poet.

Two volumes he published, ringing the changes of his contempt and hatred of Lötz, at the same time praising the vir-

tues of those who had found in him a kindred spirit. A "knight of the order of poets" he styles himself, and to all Humanists, to the "fellow-feeling among free spirits" ("Gemeingeist unter freien Geistern") he appeals for sympathy in his struggle with Lötz.

He had, indeed, not found a foeman worthy of his steel, but he had shown what a finely tempered blade he bore. In later times he found more worthy adversaries, and his steel had need of all its sharpness and temper. But it never failed him to the last.

Meanwhile he wandered to Vienna, giving lectures there on the art of poetry. But poetry was abhorred by the schoolmen everywhere, and the students of the university were forbidden to attend his lectures. He then went to Italy. When he reached Pavia, he found the city in the midst of a siege, surrounded by a hostile French army. He fell ill of a fever, and giving himself up for dead, he composed the famous epitaph for himself, of which I give a rough translation:

Here, also be it said, a life of ill-fortune is ended;
By evil pursued on the water; beset by wrong upon land.
Here lie Hutten's bones; he, who had done nothing wrongful,
Was wickedly robbed of his life by the sword in a Frenchman's hand.
By Fate, decided that he should see unlucky days only;
Decided that even these days could never be many or long;
Hemmed in by danger and death, he forsook not serving the muses,
And as well as he could, he rendered this service in song.

The Frenchman's sword did not rob him of life. The Frenchman's hand took his money, which was not much, and again sent him adrift. He now set his pen to writing epigrams on the Emperor of Germany, wherein Maximilian was compared to the eagle which should devour the frogs in the swamps of Venice. Meanwhile he enlisted as a common soldier in Maximilian's army.

In Italy the abuses of the Papacy attracted his attention. Officials of the Church were then engaged in extending the demand for indulgences. The alleged sale of pardons "straight from Rome, all hot," was becoming a scandal in Christendom. All this roused the wrath of Hutten, who attacked the Pope himself in his songs:

"Heaven now stands for a price to be peddled and sold,
But what new folly is this, as though the fiat of Heaven
Needed an earthly witness, an earthly warrant and seal!"

More prosperous times followed, and we find Hutten honored as a poet, living in the court of the Archbishop of Mainz. At this time a cousin, Hans Hutten, a young man of great courage and promise, was a knight in the service of Ulrich, Duke of Würtemberg. He was a favorite of the Duke, and he and his young wife were the life of the Würtemberg court. Duke Ulrich once came to Hans

Hutten and threw himself at his feet, begging that he should cast off his wife, whom he loved, that she might be the mistress of the Duke. Hans Hutten answered the Duke as a brave man should, and the Duke arose with murder in his heart. Afterward, when they were hunting in a wood, he stabbed Hans Hutten in the back with his sword.

All this came to the ear of Ulrich Hutten in Mainz. Love for his cousin, love for his name and family, love for freedom and truth, all urged him to avenge the murdered Hans. The wrongs the boy had suffered from the coarse-hearted Professor Lötz became as nothing beside this great crime against the Huttens and against manhood.

In all the history of invective, there is nothing more fierce than Hutten's appeal against Duke Ulrich. In five different pamphlets his crime was described to the German people and all good men, from the Emperor down, were called on to help him in his struggle against the Duke of Würtemberg.

"I envy you your fame, you murderer," he wrote. "A year will be named for you, and there shall be a day set off for you. Future generations shall read, for those who are born this year, that they were born in the year stained by the ineffaceable shame of Germany. You will come into the calendar, scoundrel. You will enrich history. Your deed is immortal, and you will be remembered in all future time. You have had your ambition, and you shall never be forgot."

This struggle lasted long. Finally, after many appeals, the German nobles rose in arms and besieged Stuttgart, and Duke Ulrich was driven from the land he had disgraced.

Again Hutten visited Italy, this time after a partial reconciliation with his father, who would overlook his failure to become a priest if he would study law at Rome. At about the same time Luther visited Rome. He came, at first, in a spirit of humble reverence; but, at last, he wrote in fierce indignation: "Wenn es gibt eine Hölle, Roma ist darauf

gebaut." ("If there is a hell, Rome is built on it.")

The impression on Hutten was scarcely less vivid. Little by little he began to see in the Pope of Rome a criminal greater than Professor Lötz, more dangerous than Duke Ulrich, one who could devour not one cousin only, but the whole German people and nation. "For three hundred years," said he, "the Pope and the schoolmen have been covering the teachings of Christ with a mass of superstitious ceremonies and wicked books." These feelings were poured out in an appeal to the German rulers to shake off the yoke, and no longer send their money to "Simon of Rome."

Hutten's friends tried to induce him to keep the peace. He was a man not of free thought only, but of free speech, and knew no concealment. Milder men in those times, as later Melancthon and Erasmus, were full of admiration of Hutten, and valued his skill and force. But they were afraid of him, and fearful always that the best of causes should be wrecked in his hands.

At this time, at the age of twenty-five, Hutten is described as a small, thin man, of homely features, with blonde hair and black beard. His pale face wore a severe, almost wild, expression. His speech was sharp, often terrible. Yet with those whom he loved and respected his voice had a frank and winning charm. He had but few friends, but they were fast ones. His personal character, so far as records go, was singularly pure, and not often in his writings does he strike a coarse or unclean note.

In these days, the two most learned men in Germany were Erasmus and Reuchlin. They were leaders of the Humanists, skilled in Greek and even in the Hebrew tongue, and were called by Hutten "the two eyes of Germany." A Jew named Pfefferkorn, who had become converted to Christianity, was filled with an unholy zeal against his fellow-Jews who had not been converted. Among other things, he asked an edict from the Emperor that all Jewish books in Germany should be destroyed. Reuch-

lin was a Hebrew scholar. He had written a Hebrew grammar, and was learned in the Old Testament, as well as in the Talmud and other deposits of the ancient lore of the rabbis. The Emperor referred Pfefferkorn's request to Reuchlin for his opinion. Reuchlin decided that there was no valid reason for the destruction of any of the ancient Jewish writings, and only of such modern ones as might be decided by competent scholars to be hostile to Christianity.

This enraged Pfefferkorn and his Obscurantist associates. Pamphlets were written denouncing Reuchlin, and these were duly answered. A general war of words between the Humanists and Obscurantists began, which, in time, came before the Pope and the Emperor. Reuchlin was regarded in those days as a man of unusual calmness and dignity. Next to Erasmus, he was the most learned scholar in Europe. He would never condescend in his controversies to the coarse terms used by his adversaries. We may learn something of the temper

of the times by observing that, in a single pamphlet, as quoted by Strauss, the epithets that the dignified Reuchlin applies to Pfefferkorn are: "A poisonous beast," "a scarecrow," "a horror," "a mad dog," "a horse," "a mule," "a hog," "a fox," "a raging wolf," "a Syrian lion," "a Cerberus," "a fury of hell." In this matter Reuchlin was finally triumphant. This triumph was loudly celebrated by his friend Hutten in another poem, in which the Obscurantists were mercilessly attacked.

We have seen with Hutten's growth a gradual increase in the importance of those to whom he declared himself an enemy. He began as a boy with the obscure Professor Lötz. He ended with the Pope of Rome.

At this time Reuchlin published a volume called "Epistolae Clarorum Virorum" ("letters of illustrious men"). It was made up of letters written by the various learned men of Europe to Reuchlin, in sympathy with him in his struggle. The title of this work gave the keynote

to a series of letters called "Epistolae Obscurorum Virorum" ("letters of obscure men")—that is, of Obscurantists.

These letters, written by different persons but largely by Hutten, are the most remarkable of all satires of that time. They are a series of imaginary epistles, supposed to be addressed by various Obscurantists to a poet named Ortuinus. They are written with consummate skill, in the degenerate Latin used by the priests in those days, and are made to exhibit all the secret meanness, ignorance, and perversity of their supposed writers.

The first of these epistles of the "obscure men" were eagerly read by their supposed associates, the Obscurantists. Here were men who felt as they felt, and who were not afraid to speak. The mendicant friars in England had a day of rejoicing, and a Dominican friar in Flanders bought all the copies of the letters he could find to present to his bishop.

But in time even the dullest began to fell the severity of the satire. The last of these letters formed the most telling

blows ever dealt at the schoolmen by the men of learning. In one of the earlier letters we find this question, which may serve as a type of many others:

A man ate an egg, in which a chicken was just beginning to form, ignorant of that fact, and forgetting that it was Friday. A friend consoles him by saying that a chicken in that stage counts for no more than worms in cheese or in cherries, and these can be eaten even in fasting-time. But the writer is not satisfied. Worms, he has been told by a physician, who was also a great naturalist, are reckoned as fishes, which one can eat on fast-days. But with all this, he fears that a young chicken may be really forbidden food, and he asks the help of the poet Ortuinus to a righteous decision.

Another person writes to Ortuinus: "There is a new book much talked of here, and, as you are a poet, you can do us a good service by telling us of it. A notary told me that this book is the well-spring of poetry, and that its author, one Homer, is the father of all poets. And

he said there is another Homer in Greek. I said, 'What is the use of the Greek? The Latin is much better.' And I asked, 'What is contained in the book?' And he said it treats of certain people who are called Greeks, who carried on a war with some others called Trojans. And these Trojans had a great city, and those Greeks besieged it and stayed there ten years. And the Trojans came out and fought them till the whole plain was covered with blood and quite red. And they heard the noise in heaven, and one of them threw a stone which twelve men could not lift, and a horse began to talk and utter prophecies. But I can't believe that, because it seems impossible, and the book seems to me not to be authentic. I pray you give me your opinion."

Another relates the story of his visit to Reuchlin: 'When I came into his house, Reuchlin said, 'Welcome, bachelor; seat yourself.' And he had a pair of spectacles ('unum Brillum') on his nose, and a book before him curiously written, and I saw at once that it was

neither in German nor Bohemian, nor yet in Latin. And I said to him, 'Respected Doctor, what do they call that book?' He answered, 'It is called the Greek Plutarch, and it treats of philosophy.' And I said, 'Read some of it, for it must contain wonderful things.' Then I saw a little book, newly printed, lying on the floor, and I said to him, 'Respected Doctor, what lies there?' He answered, 'It is a controversial book, which a friend in Cologne sent me lately. It is written against me. The theologians in Cologne have printed it, and they say that Johann Pfefferkorn wrote it.' And I said, 'What will you do about it? Will you not vindicate yourself?' And he answered, 'Certainly not. I have been vindicated long ago, and can spend no time on these follies. My eyes are too weak for me to waste their strength on matters which are not useful.' "

We next find Hutten high in the favor of the Emperor Maximilian, by whose order he was crowned poet-laureate of Germany. The wreath of laurel was

woven by the fair hands of Constance Peutinger, who was called the handsomest girl in Germany, and with great ceremony she put this wreath on his head in the presence of the Emperor, at Mainz.

Now, for the first time, Hutten seems to have thought seriously of marriage. He writes to a friend, Friedrich Fischer: "I am overcome with a longing for rest, that I may give myself to art. For this, I need a wife who shall take care of me. You know my ways. I cannot be alone, not even by night. In vain they talk to me of the pleasures of celibacy. To me it is loneliness and monotony. I was not born for that. I must have a being who can lead me from sorrows—yes, even from my graver studies; one with whom I can joke and play, and carry on light and happy conversations, that the sharpness of sorrow may be blunted and the heat of anger made mild. Give me a wife, dear Friedrich—you know what sort of wife I want. She must be young, pretty, well educated, serene, tender, patient. Money enough give her, but not

too much. For riches I do not seek; and as for blood and birth, she is already noble to whom Hutten gives his hand."

A young woman—Cunigunde Glauburg—was found, and she seemed to meet all requirements. But the mother of the bride was not pleased with the arrangement. Hutten was a "dangerous man," she said, "a revolutionist." "I hope," said Hutten, "that when she comes to know me, and finds in me nothing restless, nothing mutinous, my studies full of humor and wit, she will look more kindly on me." To a brother of Cunigunde he writes: "Hutten has not conquered many cities, like some of these iron-eaters, but through many lands has wandered with the fame of his name. He has not slain his thousands, like those, but may be none the less loved for that. He does not stalk about on yard-long shin-bones, nor does his gigantic figure frighten travelers; but in strength of spirit he yields to none. He does not glow with the splendor of beauty, but he dares flatter himself that his soul is

worthy of love. He does not talk big, nor swell himself with boasting, but simply, openly, honestly acts and speaks."

But all his wooing came to naught; another man wedded the fair Cunigunde, and the coming storm of Romish wrath left Hutten no opportunity to turn his attention elsewhere.

The old Pope was now dead, and one of the famous family of Medici, in Florence, had succeeded him as Leo the Tenth. Leo was kindly disposed toward the Humanist studies, and Hutten, as poet of the Humanists, addressed to him directly a remarkable appeal, which made the turning-point in his life, for it placed him openly among ~~among~~ those who resisted the Pope.

Recounting to the new Pope Leo all the usurpations which in his judgment had been made, one by one, by his predecessors—all the robberies, impositions, and abuses of the Papacy, from the time of Constantine down—he appeals to Leo, as a wise man and a scholar, to restore

stolen power and property, to correct all abuses, to abandon all temporal power, and become once more the simple Bishop of Rome. "For there can never be peace between the robber and the robbed till the stolen goods are returned."

Now, for the first time, the work of Luther came to Hutten's attention. The disturbances at Wittenberg were in the beginning treated by all as a mere squabble of the monks. To Leo the Tenth this discussion had no further interest than this: "Brother Martin," being a scholar, was most probably right. To Hutten, who cared nothing for doctrinal points, it had no significance; the more monkish strifes the better—"the sooner would the enemies eat each other up."

But now Hutten came to recognize in Luther the apostle of freedom of thought, and in that struggle of the Reformation he found a nobler cause than that of the Humanists—in Luther a greater than Reuchlin. And Hutten never did things by halves. He entered into the warfare heart and soul. In 1520 he published his

"Roman Trinity," his gage of battle against Rome.

He now, like Luther, began to draw his inspiration, as well as his language, not from the classics, but from the New Testament. A new motto he took for himself, one which was henceforth ever on his lips, and which appears again and again in his later writings: "Jacta est alea" ("the die is cast"); or, in the stronger German, in which he more often gave it, "Ich hab's gewagt" ("I have dared it!"

"Auf dasz ichs nit anheb umsunst
Wolauf, wir haben Gottes Gunst;
Wer wollt in solchem bleiben dheim?
Ich hab's gewagt! das ist mein Reim!"

"Der niemand grössern Schaden bringt,
Dann mir als nooch die Sach gelingt
Dahin mich Gott und Wahrheit bringt,
Ich hab's gewagt."

"So breche ich hindurch, durch breche ich, oder ich falle,
Kämpfend, nach dem ich einmal geworfen das Loos!"

(So break I through the ranks else I die fighting—
Fighting, since once and forever the die I have cast!)

In this motto we have the keynote to his fiery and earnest nature. Convinced that a cause was right, he knew no bounds of caution or policy; he feared no prison or death. "I have dared it!"

"To all free men of Germany" he speaks. "Their tyranny will not last forever; unless all signs deceive me, their power is soon to fail—for already is the axe laid at the root of the tree, and that tree which bears not good fruit will be rooted out, and the vineyard of the Lord will be purified. That you shall not only hope, but soon see with your eyes. Meanwhile, be of good cheer, you men of Germany. Not weak, not untried, are your leaders in the struggle for freedom. Be not afraid, neither weaken in the midst of the battle, for broken at last is the strength of the enemy, for the cause is righteous, and the rage of tyranny is al-

ready at its height. Courage, and farewell! Long live freedom! I have dared it!" ("Lebe die Freiheit; ich hab's gewagt.")

Warnings and threats innumerable came to Hutten, from enemies who feared and hated, from friends who were fearful and trembling; but he never flinched. He had "dared it." The bull of excommunication frightened him no more than it did Luther. But at last he was compelled to retire from the cities, and he took up his abode in the Castle of Ebernburg, with Franz von Sickingen.

Franz von Sickengen was one of the great nobles of Germany, and he ruled over the region in the bend of the Rhine between Worms and Bingen. His was one of the bravest characters of that time. A knight of the highest order, he became a disciple of Hutten and Luther, and on his help was the greatest reliance placed by the friends of the growing reform. His strong Castle of Ebernburg, on the hills above Bingen, was the refuge of all who were persecuted by the authorities.

The "Inn of Righteousness" ("Herberge von Gerechtigkeit"), the Ebernburg was called by Hutten.

The Humanists who had stood with Hutten in the struggle between Reuchlin and Pfefferkorn saw with growing concern the gradual transfer of the field of battle from questions of literature to questions of religion. Reuchlin, growing old and weak, wrote a letter, disavowing any sympathy with the new uprisings against the time-honored authority of the Church. This letter came into Hutten's hands, and, with all his reverence for his old friend and master, he could not keep silence.

"Eternal gods!", he writes, "what do I see? Have you sunk so deep in weakness and fear, O Reuchlin! that you cannot endure blame even for those who have fought for you in time of danger? Through such shameful subservience do you hope to reconcile those to whom, if you were a man, you would never give a friendly greeting, so badly have they treated you? Yet reconcile them; and if

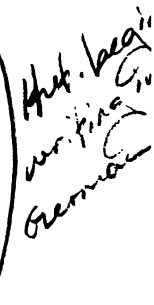
there is no other way, go to Rome and kiss the feet of Leo, and then write against us. Yet you shall see that, against your will, and against the will of all the godless courtesans, we shall shake off the shameful yoke, and free ourselves from slavery. I am ashamed that I have written so much for you—have done so much for you—since when it comes to action you have made such a miserable exit from the ranks. From me shall you know henceforth that whether you fight in Luther's cause or throw yourself at the feet of the Bishop of Rome, I shall never trust you more." The poor old man, thus harassed on all sides, found no longer any rest or comfort in his studies. Worn out in body and broken in spirit, he soon died.

The great source of Luther's hold on Germany lay in his direct appeal to the common people. For this he translated the Bible into German—even now the noblest version of the Bible in existence. For in translating a work of inspiration the intuition of a man like Luther, as

Bayard Taylor has said, counts for more than the combined scholarship of a hundred men learned in the Greek and Hebrew. "The clear insight of one prophet is better than the average judgment of forty-seven scribes." The German language was then struggling into existence, and scholars considered it beneath their notice. It was fixed for all time by Luther's Bible. Luther often spent a week on a single verse to find and fix the idiomatic German. "It is easy to plow when the field is cleared," he said. "We must not ask the letters of the Latin alphabet how to speak German, but the mother in the kitchen and the plowman in the field, that they may know that the Bible is speaking German, and speaking to them. 'Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.' No German peasant would understand that. We must make it plain to him. 'Wess das Herz voll ist, dess geht der Mund über.' ('Whose heart is full, his mouth runs over.')"

The same influence acted on Hutten.

All his previous writings were in Latin, and were directed to scholars only. Henceforth he wrote the language of the Fatherland, and his appeals to the people were in language which the people could and did read. No Reformation ever came while only the learned and the noble were in the secret of it.



"Latein, ich vor geschrieben hab
Das war ein jeden nicht bekannt;
Jetzt schrei ich an das Vaterland,
Teutsch Nation in ihrer Sprach
Zu bringen diesen Dingen Rach."

(For Latin wrote I hitherto,
Which common people did not know.
Now cry I to the Fatherland,
The German people, in their tongue,
Redress to bring for all these wrongs.")

A song for the people he now wrote, the "New Song of Ulrich von Hutten," a song which stands with Luther's "Ein feste Burg" in the history of the Reformation:

"Ich hab's gewagt mit Sinnen,
Und trag des noch kein Reu,
Mag ich nit dran gewinnen,
Noch muss man spüren Treu.

"Darmit ich mein
Mit eim allen,
Wenn Man es wolt erkennen
Dem Land zu gut
Wiewol man thut
Ein Pfaffenfeind mich nennen."

Part of this may be freely translated—

"With open eyes I have dared it,
And cherish no regret,
And though I fail to conquer,
The truth is with me yet."

Hutten's dream in these days was of a league of nobles, cities and people, aided by the Emperor if possible, against the Emperor if necessary, which should by force of arms forever free Germany from the rule of the Pope. Luther had little faith in the power of force. "What Hutten wishes," he wrote to a friend, "you see. But I do not wish to strive for the

Gospel with murder and violence. Through the power of the Word is the world subdued; through the Word the Church shall be preserved and freed. Even Antichrist shall be destroyed by the power of the Word."

Now came the great Diet at Worms, whither Luther was called before the Emperor to answer for his heretical teachings, and before which he stood firm and undaunted, a noble figure which has been a turning point in history. "Here I stand. I can do nothing else. God help me."

Hutten, on his sick-bed at Ebernburg, not far away, was full of wrath at the trial of Luther. "Away!" he shouted, "away from the clear fountains, ye filthy swine! Out of the sanctuary, ye accursed peddlers! Touch no longer the altar with your desecrating hands. What have ye to do with the alms of our fathers, which were given for the poor and the Church, and you spend for splendor, pomp, and foolery, while the children suffer for bread? See you not that the wind of Freedom is blowing? ("Sehet ihr nicht dass

die Luft der Freiheit weht?") On two men not much depends. Know that there are many Luthers, many Huttens here. Should either of us be destroyed, still greater is the danger that awaits you; for then, with those battling for freedom, the avengers of innocence will make common cause."

I have wished, in writing this little sketch, that I could have a novelist's privilege of bringing out my hero happily at the end. I have hitherto had the struggles of a man living before his time to relate; the voice of one crying in the wilderness. If this were a romance, I might tell how, with Hutten's entreaties and Luther's exhortations, and under the wise management of Franz von Sickingen, the people banded together against foreign foes and foreign domination, and German unity, German freedom, and religious liberty were forever established in the Fatherland. But, alas! the history does not run in that way; at least not till a hundred years of war had bathed the land in blood.

For Hutten henceforth I have only misery and failure to relate. The union of knights and cities resulted in a ruinous campaign of Franz von Sickingen against Trèves. Sickingen's army was driven back by the Elector. His strong Castle of Landstuhl was besieged by the Catholic princes, and cannon was used in this siege for the first time in history. The walls of Landstuhl, twenty-five feet thick, were battered down, and Sickingen himself was killed by the falling of a beam. The war was over, and nothing worthy had been accomplished.

When Luther heard of the death of Sickingen, he wrote to a friend: "Yesterday I heard and read of Franz von Sickingen's true and sad story. God is a righteous but marvelous Judge. Sickingen's fall seems to be a verdict of the Lord that strengthens me in the belief that the force of arms is to be kept far from matters of the Gospel."

Hutten was driven from the Ebernburg. He was offered high rank in the service of the King of France; but, as a

true German, he refused it, and fled, penniless and sick, to Basle, in Switzerland.

Here the great Humanist, Erasmus, reigned supreme. Erasmus disavowed all sympathy with his former friend and fellow student. He called Hutten a dangerous and turbulent man, and warned the Swiss against him. Erasmus had noticed, with horror, in those who had studied Greek, that the influence of Lutheranism was fatal to learning; that zeal for philology decreased as zeal for religion increased. Already Erasmus, like Reuchlin, was ranged on the side of the Pope. So, in letters and pamphlets, Erasmus attacked Hutten; and the poet was not slow in giving as good as he received. And this war between the Humanist and the Reformer gave great joy to the Obscurantists, who feared and hated them both.

"Humanism," says Strauss, "was broad-minded but faint-hearted, and in none is this better seen than in Erasmus. Luther was a narrower man, but his un-

varying purpose, never looking to left nor right, was his strength. Humanism is the broad mirror-like Rhine at Bingen. It must grow narrower and wilder before it can break through the mountains to the sea."

Repulsed by Erasmus at Basle, Hutten fled to Mulhausen. Attacked by assassins there, he left at midnight for Zurich, where he put himself under the protection of Ulrich Zwingli. In Zwingli, the purest, loftiest, and clearest of insight of all of the leaders of the Reformation, Hutten found a congenial spirit. His health was now utterly broken. To the famous Baths of Pfaffërs he went, in hope of release from pain. But the modern bath-houses of Ragatz were not built in those days, and the daily descent by rope from above into the dark and dismal chasm was too much for his feeble strength. Then Zwingli sent him to a kindly friend, the Pastor Hans Schnegg, who lived on the little island of Ufnau, in the Lake of Zurich. And here at Ufnau, worn out by his long, double conflict with the Pope

and with disease, Ulrich von Hutten died in 1523, at the age of thirty-five. "He left behind him," wrote Zwingli, "nothing of worth. Books he had none; no money, and no property of any sort, except a pen."

What was the value of this short and troubled life? Three hundred years ago it was easy to answer with Erasmus and the rest—Nothing. Hutten had denounced the Pope, and the Pope had crushed him. He had stirred up noblemen to battle for freedom, and they, too, had been destroyed. Franz von Sickingen was dead. The league of the cities and princes had faded away forever. Luther was hidden in the Wartburg, no one knew where, and scarcely a trace of the Reformation was left in Germany. Whatever Hutten had touched he had ruined. He had "dared it," and the force he had defied had crushed him in return.

But, looking back over these centuries, the life of Hutten rises into higher prominence. His writings were seed in good

ground. At his death the Reformation seemed hopeless. Six years later, at the second Diet of Spires, half Germany signed the protest which made us Protestants. "It was Luther alone who said no at the Diet of Worms. It was princes and people, cities and churches, who said no at the Diet of Spires."

Hutten's dream of a United German people freed from the yoke of Rome was for three hundred years unrealized. For the Reformation sundered the German people and ruined the German Empire, and not till our day has German unity come to pass. But, as later reformers said, "It is better that Germany should be half German, than that it should be all Roman."

For the true meaning of this conflict does not lie in any question of church against church or creed against creed, nor that worship in cathedrals with altars and incense and rich ceremony should give way to the simpler forms of the Lutheran litany. The issue was that of the growth of man. The "right of

private interpretation" is the recognition of personal individuality.

The death of Hutten was, after all, not untimely. He had done his work. His was the "voice of one crying in the wilderness." The head of John the Baptist lay on the charger before Jesus had fulfilled his mission. Arnold Winkelried, at Sempach, filled his body with Austrian spears before the Austrian phalanx was broken. John Brown fell at Harper's Ferry before a blow was struck against slavery. Ulrich von Hutten had set every man, woman and child in Germany to thinking of his relations to the Lord and to the Pope. His mission was completed; and longer life for him, as Strauss has suggested, might have led to discord among the Reformers themselves.

For this lover of freedom was intolerant of intolerance. For fine points of doctrine he had only contempt. When the Lutherans began to treat as enemies all Reformers who did not with them subscribe to the Confession of Augsburg, Hutten's fiery pen would have repudiated

this confession. For he fought for freedom of the spirit, not for the Lutheran confession.

Had he remained in Switzerland, he would have been still less in harmony with the prevailing conditions. Not long after, Zwingli was slain in the wretched battle of Kappel, and, after him, the Swiss Reformation passed under the control of John Calvin. There can be no doubt that the stern pietist of Geneva would have burned Ulrich von Hutten with as calm a concience as he did Michael Servetus.

The idea of a united and uniform Church, whether Catholic, Lutheran, or Calvinist, had little attraction for Hutten. He was one of the first to realize that religion is individual, not collective. It is concerned with life, not with creeds or ceremonies. In the high sense, no man can follow or share the religion of another. His religion, whatever it may be, is his own. It is built up from his own thoughts and prayers and actions. It is the expression of his own ideals. Only forms can be transferred unchanged from man

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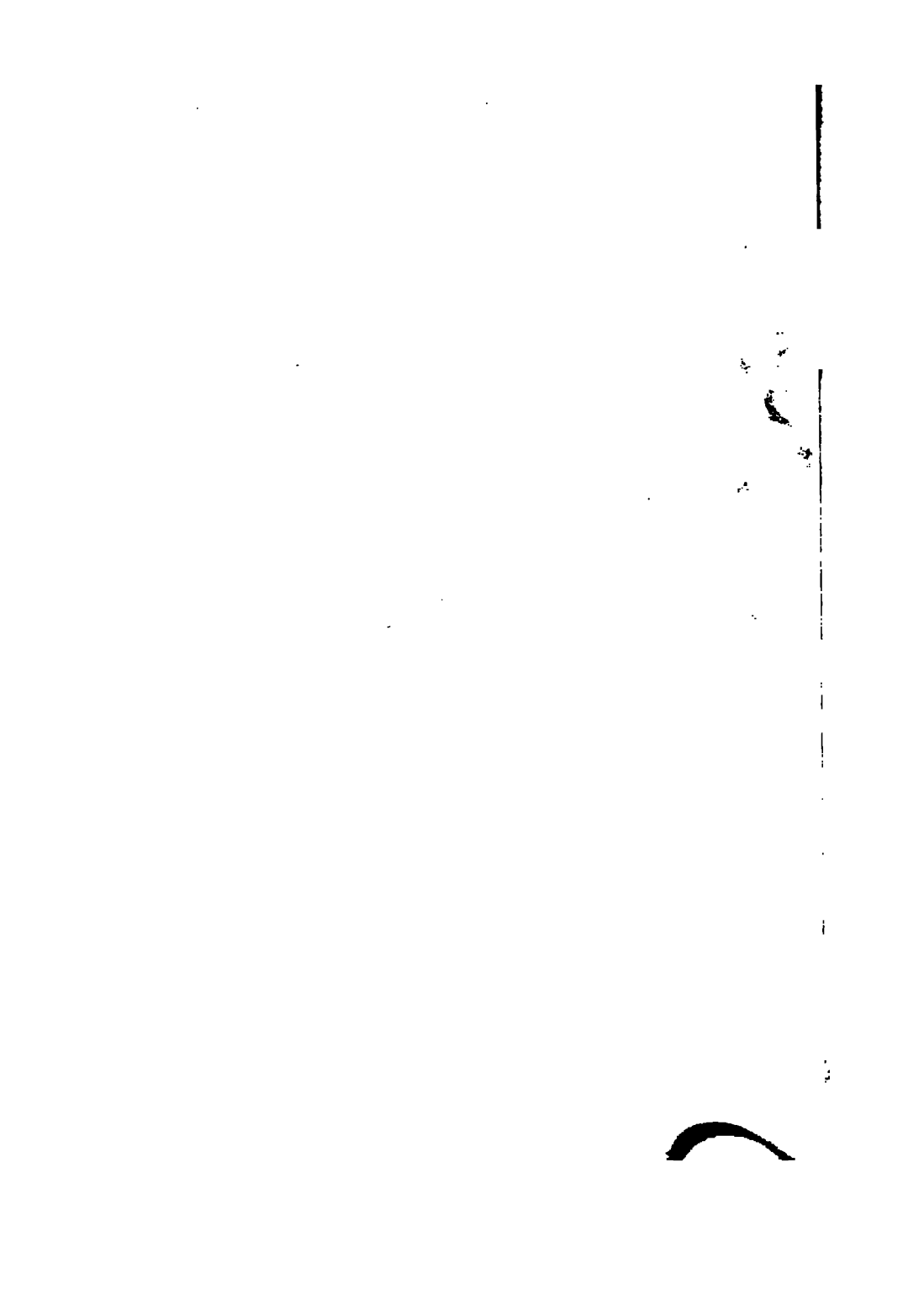
to man, from generation to generation,—never realities. For whatever is real to a man becomes part of him, and partakes of his growth, and is modified by his personality.

Hutten was buried where he died, on the little island of Ufnau, in the Lake of Zurich, at the foot of the mighty Alps. And some of his old associates put over his grave a commemorative stone. Afterwards, the monks of the abbey of Einsiedeln, in Schwytz, came to the island and removed the stone, and obliterated all traces of the grave.

It was well that they did so; for now the whole green island of Ufnau is his alone, and it is his worthy sepulcher.



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